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THROUGH AGNOSTIC SPECTACLES

ALEX. KADISON

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THROUGH AGNOSTIC
SPECTACLES

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BY

ALEXANDER KADISON, M.A.

NEW YORK
THE TRUTH SEEKER CO.

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TO

I. D.

FRIEND AND COMRADE TRUE

I LOVINGLY INSCRIBE

THIS LITTLE BOOK

PREFACE

“My Creed,” “The Enigma of Life,” “Lines to I. D.,” and “From Metaphysics to Agnosticism” were originally published in the London *Literary Guide* for July, 1914, October, 1915, July, 1916, and January, 1918, respectively. “The Enigma of Life” was based upon a discussion led by the author, in the fall of 1913, in the columns of the New York *Times*. “The Golden Age of Faith and Filth” was first published—without notes, and with a few minor deviations from the reading of the author’s manuscript—in the New York *Truth Seeker* for October 31, 1914. The manuscript reading (barring some half-dozen trivial alterations) is here restored; it has, moreover, been materially amplified

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by the addition of rather copious notes, which are given in the appendix and indicated in the text by superior figures. "The Summons to Prayer" originally appeared in the *Truth Seeker* for November 14, 1914. "Piety and Plagiarism," accompanied by a brief biographical note, was the first and leading article in the *Truth Seeker* for December 25, 1915. For the catchy sub-title, even more highly alliterative than the main title, the author was not responsible and can therefore claim no credit.

The Editors of the two Rationalist journals named are hereby thanked for permission to republish.

It may be well to state that nothing appearing in the following pages is to be construed as having been prompted by hostility on the part of the writer to the personality of Jesus of Nazareth. Though

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the author holds no brief for Jesus the Son of God, or for his reputed Father, or for any gods that be or were or will be, he believes that Jesus the Son of Man—the *human* Jesus, with whose name is associated the pure and lofty ethic of the Sermon on the Mount—will justly remain a source of inspiration to mankind when dogmatic Christianity has completely disappeared—as disappear it must.

A. K.

May, 1918.

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My Creed

REASON my final arbiter shall be;
Blind faith is barred from my philosophy.
Nor God nor Christ know I: my deity
 Is Man; my creed
Bows to no fetish. Neither do I crave
Salvation in a life beyond the grave:
Far better strive mankind on earth to save
 Through word and deed.

FROM METAPHYSICS TO AGNOSTICISM

“THE great uncertainty I found in metaphysical reasonings,” writes Benjamin Franklin, referring to his youthful speculations, “disgusted me, and I quitted that kind of reading and study for others more satisfactory.” Are we to conclude from this that the future statesman, once having ceased applying himself to metaphysics, was thenceforth emancipated from the intellectual attitude which had previously accounted for the practice? Apparently yes, but in reality no; for to the end of his long life—albeit he was not primarily a metaphysicist—Franklin remained, in spite of himself, in-

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delibly stamped with a metaphysical cast of mind.

The mental experience of the celebrated American philosopher, far from being unique or even markedly out of the ordinary, might be paralleled in the lives of countless other thinkers, both professional and amateur. Whether or not the phenomenon be traceable to temperamental factors of a basic and ineradicable nature, it cannot be denied that certain persons, once blessed or cursed—let the reader take his choice—with the desire to probe the cosmos to its very bottom, persist therein even after they have become convinced of the utter futility of such investigation. Like Tantalus of the myth, they must needs make the effort to drink time and time again, though time and time again they fail to quench their thirst.

Can it be that they are, after all, never

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quite convinced that the quest of ultimate truth is a barren one? Can it be that in an ever-recurring doubt must be sought the reason for the constant renewal of a search which the mind repeatedly renounces as hopeless? It is not the search for deity with which I am here concerned: I assume that the majority of us are agreed in rejecting such doctrines as posit or profess to demonstrate the existence of a personal God, and in maintaining a definitely Agnostic attitude with regard to other more or less attenuated phases of Theism. What I have reference to is the fact that many thinking men and women, including not a few whose Negativism and Agnosticism in the realm of theology are unequivocal, seem to find it possible to take a positive mental stand as respects the field of general metaphysics—to give assent, that is, to what sometimes is aptly

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designated as a “philosophical *creed*.” Yet there can be no more justification, intellectually speaking, for assuming a positive position in the one case than in the other, since in both spheres the natural limitations of the human mind are equally pronounced.

Shall I declare myself a Logical Monist or a Logical Pluralist? Shall I subscribe to Nominalism or to Platonic Realism? Which shall I regard as the ultimate criterion of truth—perception or logical coherence? Can I accept, or must I reject, the substance hypothesis? Is the doctrine of eternalism valid, or must it give way to the doctrine of creative evolution? These and a host of other idle problems continually arise to trouble him whose mind is not released from bondage to metaphysical speculation. And what Sir Leslie Stephen, in *An Agnostic's*

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Apology, asserts of natural theology is applicable to the entire field of metaphysics—namely, that “there is not a single proof . . . of which the negative has not been maintained as vigorously as the affirmative.” “State any one proposition,” says Sir Leslie a little farther in the course of his essay, speaking now more particularly of metaphysical inquiry, “in which all philosophers agree, and I will admit it to be true; or any one which has a manifest balance of authority, and I will agree that it is probable. But so long as every philosopher flatly contradicts the first principles of his predecessors, why affect certainty? . . . There is no certainty.” It is, indeed, too true that every position in ontology and epistemology, without exception, resolves itself in the last analysis into nothing more than a mass of verbiage, inasmuch as all positions are of

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necessity grounded upon axioms or *a priori* convictions—that is, upon undemonstrable propositions.

And herein consists the clue to the perennial difficulty involved in the endeavour to fathom absolute reality. Notwithstanding the fact that logic inevitably lies at the basis of all human reasoning, even logic, in the nature of the case, can never demonstrate its own fundamental premises; “and as it is logically prior to all other deduction, no other science can do so either” (W. T. Marvin). “Let there be light!” says man, and there is light; but only a glimmer. Darkness still rules on the face of the deep, and, for aught that can be conceived to the contrary, will ever continue her sway.

As an example of the well-nigh incredible lengths to which even the most brilliant of men may be led by continued

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wandering in the deceptive labyrinth of metaphysics, the recently issued work by Mark Twain, entitled *The Mysterious Stranger*,* deserves to be cited. The book represents the renowned humourist's maturest thought on human life and on the universe, and, having been posthumously published, may, in a double sense, be termed his intellectual last will and testament. It is, in general, a masterly performance. Its trenchant and unanswerable criticisms of the prevailing creeds, together with the revelation it affords that the author in his later years abandoned his earlier Deism for Atheism "pure and undefiled," possess, of course, unusual interest for Rationalists. However—and this is a point to

* *The Mysterious Stranger: A Romance.* By Mark Twain. (Harper.) 151 pp., with illustrations; 7s. 6d. net. [In the United States, \$2.00 net.]

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which I would here direct particular attention—this Atheism, strange to say, rested metaphysically, not upon a materialistic foundation, as Atheism almost invariably does, but upon what is perhaps the grossest paradox of subjective idealism!

On the last page of the book the character called Satan—who is really the philosopher-humourist in disguise—concluding the disclosure of the mighty secret which he has just revealed, declares:—

“It is true, that which I have revealed to you: there is no God, no universe, no human race, no earthly life, no heaven, no hell. It is all a dream. . . . Nothing exists but you. And you are but a *thought . . .* wandering forlorn among the empty eternities!”

Now, this pronouncement, taken in conjunction with the pages which immediately precede it, is simply a categorical avowal

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of the grotesque eighteenth-century doctrine generally referred to under the name of Solipsism—the doctrine that the human mind can have valid knowledge of the existence of nothing but itself. Thus it appears that no less gifted and illustrious a person than the late Mark Twain was able to find a specious solution of the problems that beset him in the most fantastic of all speculative positions—a position from which the Solipsist himself retreats the moment he begins to expound his views to others.

If we turn to the special problems of metaphysics which the various sciences—physics, chemistry, biology, and all the rest—have raised, the same inherent limitations of formal logic confront us that constitute the stumbling-block of general metaphysics. The sciences, moreover, are built very largely upon a body of concepts

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which, however well they satisfy the test of scientific utility (and that is all that is required of them), are notwithstanding but hypothetical entities that may or may not be truly existential. Prominent among these conceptual objects whose great justification is their value in explaining the facts of experience, but which none the less cannot claim phenomenal reality, are the atom, the molecule, and the undulating ether supposed to permeate all space. So eminently useful, so universally accepted, are these and other “constructions of the scientific imagination” that one is only too apt to lose sight of their true character, and to ascribe to them a metaphysical validity as far-reaching in its implications as its assumption is naïve and unwarranted.

Unlike religion, however, science in the main is modest, and does not profess abil-

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ity to penetrate the all-enshrouding veil. Those who most devote themselves to the pursuit of knowledge are best aware, to-day as in the past, how exceeding little humankind can ever hope to know. "Because I have stirred a few grains of sand on the shore," queried the venerable French entomologist, Henri Fabre, shortly before his death at the age of ninety-one, "am I in a position to know the depths of the ocean? Life has unfathomable secrets. Human knowledge will be erased from the archives of the world before we possess the last word that the gnat has to say to us. Scientifically, nature is a riddle without a definite solution to satisfy man's curiosity. Hypothesis follows hypothesis; the theoretical rubbish heap accumulates and truth ever eludes us. To know how not to know might well be the last word of wisdom."

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Aye, even so, by day! But in the silent, solemn, sombre night, beneath the myriad million stars of heaven, one seems to hear the very voice of those who in their knowledge-ignorance declared, of old time, that they knew not *that they knew not!**

* [For a well-stated—though, as I of course feel, ill-founded—adverse criticism of Fabre's position as indicated above (and, by implication, of the position taken in the last three paragraphs of this essay), see *Literary Guide*, Feb., 1918, p. 30.]

THE ENIGMA OF LIFE

“**A**LL roads lead to Rome”—so runs the ancient dictum. How true the analogy that all mental paths, if but logically pursued, lead inevitably to Agnosticism! Approach and attack the riddle of the universe from whatsoever angle you please, and the result will always be the same. As far as the attainment of a definite goal is concerned, it is quite immaterial whether one treat the cosmos itself as the point of departure of one’s speculations and work inward, so to speak, towards the finite, or whether some concrete entity or entities be adopted as the starting-point, and one work outward in the direction of the infinite. To him who meditates in Reason’s company it be-

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comes increasingly evident that, just as the mystery of the cosmos in its totality defies unravelment by man, so in its turn each and every constituent part of it refuses, sphinxlike, to yield up its eternal secret.

From time immemorial, believers in an all-benevolent Providence have sought in vain to formulate a reasonable theory of the purpose and utility of some of the lower types of plant and animal life. Many living organisms are hideous and repulsive beyond description, and appear to have no value whatever; a great number, indeed, are positively noxious. "Why, then, are they here?" asks the Theist. "Why were they created? How, in brief, can their existence be reconciled with the supposed goodness of God?"

Modern teleologists are not the first, and, one may safely venture to assert, will

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not be the last, to propound this question, which is a far deeper one than it would on the face of it appear to be. Fifteen centuries ago St. Augustine, to account for the existence of repulsive and harmful organisms, confidently declared that both the animal and the vegetable kingdoms had incurred a divine curse in consequence of Adam's disobedience. About three centuries later Bede, in his *Hexæmeron*, confirmed and emphasised the view that "fierce and poisonous animals were created for terrifying man (because God foresaw that he would sin), in order that he might be made aware of the final punishment of hell." In the twelfth century Peter Lombard, in the *Sententiæ*, and later Martin Luther and John Wesley, expressed similar views.

But since geology, anthropology, and ethnology have irrefutably exploded the

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legend of the creation of plants, animals, and man, and of the latter's sin and fall as narrated in *Genesis*, all the theological reasoning regarding animals and plants which was based on that story, and adhered to for centuries, is no longer tenable. And yet it must be borne in mind that Science herself has answered the question only negatively, not positively.

A little reflection should make it manifest that the true answer (if there be any) is, and by the constitution of our faculties ever must remain, an impenetrable mystery to us, inasmuch as every attempted explanation is, after all, but a shallow guess which does not admit of verification. This conclusion, be it noted, conforms perfectly to the Spencerian* system of

* [Though the main argument here advanced is not in the least affected, it may not be entirely irrelevant to state that the author no longer adheres to the metaphysical variety of Agnosticism expounded in

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philosophy, which teaches, among other things, that there is a certain boundary which the human intellect, by its very nature, cannot pierce, and that beyond this limit is the unknown—possibly the unknowable.

So far, so good. But do we stop here? Assuredly not; this has been only a stepping-stone; for a plant or an animal harmful to or disliked by man is certainly not a whit more in need of an explanation than man himself, who is harmful to and disliked by practically every other inhabitant of the earth. If we were seriously to endeavour to say in what way noxious and repulsive organisms might or might

Spencer's *First Principles*, but rather—with certain modifications—to the purer and more nearly genuine Agnosticism taught and defended by Huxley. Cf. Benn, *History of Modern Philosophy*, pp. 170–171; Clodd, *Thomas Henry Huxley*, pp. 125, 188–190, 220–221, *Literary Guide*, Jan., 1902, p. 11; April, 1917, p. 54; Oct., 1917, p. 160.]

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not be useful in their relation to mankind, we should do so at the risk of appearing naïvely anthropocentric. What we desire to be understood as stating is simply that we are unable to explain the existence of these organisms in any non-relative, absolute, and ultimate way; and not only is this statement applicable to the lower forms of life, but it applies with equal and undiminished force to the higher forms, not excluding man, as well.

As for anthropocentrism and all it connotes, Agnostics should be the last to lose sight of the fact that it has already long been overthrown. Its doom was sounded by Copernicus and Galileo some centuries ago, for when the geocentric theory fell the anthropocentric, its sister theory, could not long survive; and it received its death-blow at the hands of Darwin at the time the doctrine of evolu-

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tion in its biological aspect was first enunciated. All the meaning, then, that these lines seek to convey is that, life itself being ultimately a mystery, we cannot hope to account ultimately for the presence of any living organism.

“But,” exclaims the teleologist in despair, “if the scientists, philosophers, and theologians are unable to provide any adequate reason for the existence of low forms of life that are repulsive and hideous and have no obvious purpose, and if there is no discoverable reason why even man should be here, then why propagate?

“If there is no reason whatever for the existence of living organisms upon this lump of dirt as it hurls through space; if these living organisms are merely the by-product of motion, commotion, and matter; if they exist only for a moment, just as a spark of light does when two pieces

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of flint come together, why, in the name of common sense, should we do anything to assist such unjust and purposeless action on the part of Nature?

“The little fish is eaten by the big fish; man eats the big fish, and Nature eats man. But since there is no discoverable reason for the enactment of this gruesome tragedy, why keep it going? To be sure, it may be said that man is dominated by instinct, just as the lower forms of animal life are; but to make that assertion is really to commit an evasion.

“I am not suggesting a reform,” the teleologist hastens to add. “I am simply asking whether anyone can give a logical reason why the human race should be continued at the frightful expense of the individuals.”

A “logical reason” for the continuance of human existence! The inane question,

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which is inseparably connected with the problem of existence in general, belongs properly to the realm of metaphysics, or ontology. Yet the metaphysicians, being only human, have never found it possible to answer it in a rational manner. All the scientists, all the philosophers, all the teleologists and theologians of the past, have failed to furnish us with a satisfactory explanation. And no wonder: being only finite, they have naturally failed to comprehend the infinite.

The problem is manifestly beyond our scope. Socrates was right when he maintained that human knowledge at its best amounts to very little indeed—nay, to practically nothing. And yet we humans are so conceited as to imagine that we—insignificant specks in the universe—may expect to solve any problem, however weighty or profound!

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What is the upshot of it all? Simply this: That life, in any and all its phases, is ultimately just as much a mystery to-day as it ever was, and, by virtue of our mental make-up, must necessarily remain a mystery. To attempt a solution of the inscrutable enigma is futility itself. In the words of Huxley: "Why trouble ourselves about matters of which, however important they may be, we do know nothing, and can know nothing?"

THE GOLDEN AGE OF FAITH AND FILTH

DURING the past fifty years the origins of Christianity have been the object of much critical investigation on the part of numerous scholars representing various schools of thought. It is a matter of common knowledge that the results of their researches have proved painfully disconcerting, to say the least, to the upholders of tradition and superstition.

Strangely enough, however, precious little work has been done in that particular realm which perhaps best reveals the amazing putridity of the faith of Christendom. "There is, if I mistake not," writes Lecky in his monumental *History of*

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European Morals, “no department of literature the importance of which is more inadequately realised than the lives of the saints.”¹ The early saints were in a very real sense makers of Christianity, and it is therefore earnestly to be hoped that at no distant date a greater number of advanced Freethinkers may devote themselves to the study and exposition of the hagiographa than have done so until now.

The acknowledged patriarch of monachism, St. Anthony (c. 251–c. 356),² was born in Egypt.³ When he was about nineteen years of age⁴ he took up his habitation in a grotto, and thereafter, till the day of his death, subjected himself to a mode of discipline of an uncompromisingly ascetic character. There are certain phases of his career which, though assuredly not calculated to refine one’s æsthetic sensibilities, may at any rate pos-

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sess some interest for the Rationalist
reader.

We learn from St. Athanasius (c. 296-373), in his *Life of St. Anthony*, that the latter was “daily a martyr to his conscience, and contending in the conflicts of faith. . . . He had a garment of hair on the inside, while the outside was skin, which he kept until his end. And he neither bathed his body with water to free himself from filth, nor did he ever wash his feet, nor even endure so much as to put them in⁵ water, unless compelled by necessity.”⁶ Furthermore, he never once succumbed to the intensely human weakness of removing or changing his clothing⁷ during a period of not less than eighty-six years!⁸ Such was St. Anthony, the illustrious father and founder of Christian monasticism.⁹

There is no valid ground for question-

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ing the substantial accuracy of the passage adduced, for, in the words of the reverend editors of McClintock and Strong's standard theological encyclopædia, St. Athanasius "enjoyed a personal association with Anthony."¹⁰ That we are justified in construing this last statement in no purely figurative sense will become evident from the manner in which the Archbishop of Alexandria¹¹ extols St. Anthony for his extreme squalidity.

The eminent theologian goes on to say that his friend, on realising he was about to die, summoned two of his followers who for a number of years had been serving in the capacity of attendants upon him, and gave them directions with regard to the final disposition of his body and of his effects. He bade them bury him and divide his garments. "To Athanasius the bishop," said he, "give one sheepskin and

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the garment whereon I am laid, which he himself gave me new, but which with me has grown old. To Serapion the bishop give the other sheepskin, and keep the hair garment yourselves.”¹² St. Athanasius, one of the fortunate heirs, hereupon informs us that “each of those who received the sheepskin of the blessed Anthony and the garment worn by him guards it as a precious treasure. For even to look on them is as it were to behold Anthony; and he who is clothed in them seems with joy to bear his admonitions.”¹³ Though the saint does not state whether he actually saw fit to perform the delightful experiment suggested in the preceding sentence, the implication is, of course, that he did, for how could he otherwise have been qualified to make the assertion?¹⁴

“Even if this account is small compared with his merit,” continues the writer, “still

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from this reflect how great Anthony, the man of God, was.”¹⁵ One of the reasons assigned for his greatness (or, it may be, for his being “the man of God”) is the fact that St. Anthony “neither through old age was subdued by the desire of costly food, nor through the infirmity of his body changed the fashion of his clothing, nor washed even his feet with water, and yet remained entirely free from harm.

. . . He remained strong both in hands and feet; and while all men were using various foods, and washings and divers garments, he appeared more cheerful and of greater strength.”¹⁶

Then St. Athanasius, that Father of the Church who has exerted an immeasurably profound influence upon Christianity and Christendom, he after whom is named that despicable creed which consigns to everlasting perdition those that do not

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keep the faith “whole and undefiled,”¹⁷ concludes his encomium on him who so lamentably failed to keep his miserable body undefiled. To cap the climax, he enjoins his disciples to “read these words, therefore, to the rest of the brethren that they may learn what the life of monks ought to be.”¹⁸ It should be noted that the monastic spirit did indeed receive a powerful impulse from his various writings. This was especially true of his biography of St. Anthony, since that work was translated into Latin, and hence made readily accessible to the great mass of the Roman people, at a very early date.¹⁹

For a considerable length of time, however, Christian asceticism was almost entirely restricted to the Eastern wing of the Church. It cannot be said to have made any appreciable headway in the West until the last quarter of the fourth

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century. Its rapid progress in the Roman Church from that period onward is attributable to St. Jerome (c. 340-420) more than to any other single individual that we might name. The stimulus imparted by him to monasticism in particular rendered that institution one of the fundamental features of the religion of Europe for about twelve centuries to come. Only at the Protestant Reformation, so-called, did the system meet with its first serious setback.

It is not at all difficult to understand why it was that St. Jerome's potency in this direction should have proved so great and so lasting as it did. In the first place, we must remember that St. Jerome was one of the early teachers and expounders of Christian theology, and a Father of the Church. In the second place, his contribution to Christianity was exceedingly

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significant, so much so that since the early Middle Ages he has been recognised by Roman Catholics the world over as one of the original four Doctors of the Latin Church, the other three being St. Gregory the Great, St. Augustine, and St. Ambrose. Add to this the fact that not the least important of his services to the Church was his production of the Vulgate, and one need scarcely wonder that subsequent history has had to bear the stamp of his authority.²⁰

To St. Jerome matrimony was something inherently vicious, and he constantly decried it. His enthusiasm for the cenobitic life knew no bounds; his quenchless zeal in promoting it brands him as a being utterly devoid of those finer and nobler affections which ordinarily emanate from the human heart. "My breast is not of iron nor my heart of stone,"²¹ he wrote to

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one who had determined to forgo the austerities of monastic seclusion,²² but the immediate context belies his words: “Remember the day on which you enlisted, when, buried with Christ in baptism, you swore fealty to him, declaring that for his sake you would spare neither father nor mother. . . . Should your little nephew hang on your neck, pay no regard to him; should your mother with ashes on her hair and garments rent show you the breasts at which she nursed you, heed her not; should your father prostrate himself on the threshold, trample him under foot and go your way. With dry eyes fly to the standard of the cross. In such cases cruelty is the only true affection. . . .

“Now it is a widowed sister who throws her caressing arms around you. Now it is the slaves, your foster-brothers, who cry: ‘To what master are you leaving

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us?" Now it is a nurse bowed with age, and a body-servant loved only less than a father, who exclaim: "Only wait till we die and follow us to our graves!" Perhaps, too, an aged mother, with sunken bosom and furrowed brow, recalling the lullaby with which she once soothed you, adds her entreaties to theirs. The learned may call you, if they please, "the sole support and pillar of your house."²³ The love of God and the fear of hell will easily break such bonds. Scripture, you will argue, bids us obey our parents. Yes, but whoso loves them more than Christ loses his own soul."²⁴

What a striking similarity one detects between this infamous passage and another not less ominous one occurring in the Gospel of St. Matthew!²⁵ And this is an outgrowth of that religion whose keynote, they say, is Love!

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In a desert in the vicinity of Antioch St. Jerome lived as an anchoret from 374 to 379,²⁶ “rolling in sackcloth and ashes,”²⁷ to employ his own expression. He was firmly convinced that “chains, squalor, and long hair are by right tokens of sorrow.”²⁸ In what is probably his most celebrated epistle²⁹ he affords us an insight into what we might euphemistically term the negative character of his cleanliness. “Sack-cloth disfigured my unshapely limbs,” he proudly declares, “and my skin from long neglect had become as black as an Ethiopian’s.”³⁰ In 386 the saint became the head of a monastery at Bethlehem, where he passed—apart from a period of about two years—the remainder of his life.³¹

While dwelling in the desert St. Jerome composed a brief treatise on St. Paul the Hermit (?c. 228–c. 341).³² In the course

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of this tract the author admiringly recounts the case of certain “monks of whom one was shut up for thirty years and lived on barley bread and muddy water, while another in an old cistern . . . kept himself alive on five dried figs a day.”³³

As for St. Paul, the subject of the discourse, it may be said, for one thing, that he had the pleasant habit of keeping “his grey hairs unkempt.”³⁴ Not without significance, as respects the odour of sanctity which may be presumed to have pervaded his presence, is his last request, addressed to St. Anthony of Egypt, whose acquaintance we have already made. “Be so good,” he asked, “as to go and fetch the cloak Bishop Athanasius gave you, to wrap my poor body in.”³⁵ As St. Jerome explains the matter, he solicited this favour “that he might soften his friend’s regrets at his decease.”³⁶

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Equally naïve is the *Roman Breviary's* reference to the filthiness of St. Hilarion (c. 291–371), who likewise was a contemporary of St. Anthony³⁷ and who initiated Christian monastic life in Palestine.³⁸ Under pain of incurring mortal sin and the consequent forfeiture of “divine grace,” the Catholic clergy are obliged, on the feast-day of this disgusting individual,³⁹ to recite either publicly or privately⁴⁰ the edifying fact that “humi cubabat. Nec vero saccum, quo semel amictus est, unquam aut lavit, aut mutavit, cum supervacaneum esse diceret, munditas in cilicio quærere.”⁴¹ Rendered into our vernacular, this imposing array of unciceronian phrases means merely that St. Hilarion “was used to sleep on the ground. The piece of sackcloth wherewith alone he clad himself he never washed and never changed, saying that haircloth was

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a thing not worth the trouble of cleanliness.”⁴²

And yet, mechanically echoing the avowed sentiments of such dignitaries of the Church as the late Cardinal Newman,⁴³ the devout and unenlightened laity, to the overwhelming majority of whom Latin, so to speak, is Greek, exult in the lives of their saints as recorded in the *Breviary*, and in their ignorance are happy. Reader, forgive them; for they know not what they do!

As we have already had occasion to observe, the underlying aim at the basis of St. Jerome’s activities, literary and otherwise, was the widespread propagation of communistic asceticism. To this end he published, in the year 390, his *Life of St. Hilarion*,⁴⁴ to which we owe most of our detailed information respecting that personage, and from which a few quotations

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may not be thought inopportune in this connection.

After having spent two months in the company of St. Anthony,⁴⁵ who provided him with the customary eremitic apparel,⁴⁶ St. Hilarion withdrew from society at the age of fifteen.⁴⁷ He idolised his host to such a degree that, when as an old man he visited the spot where St. Anthony had passed away, he “would lie upon the saint’s bed and, as though it were still warm, would affectionately kiss it.”⁴⁸ He seems to have been accustomed to pray with his head literally bowed in the dust,⁴⁹ a practice still in vogue among many Oriental peoples at the present day.

St. Hilarion “particularly abhorred such monks as . . . were careful about expense, or raiment, or some other of those things which pass away with the world.”⁵⁰ “He shaved his hair once a year

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on Easter Day, and until his death was accustomed to lie on the bare ground or on a bed of rushes. The sackcloth which he had once put on he never washed, and he used to say that it was going too far to look for cleanliness in goats' haircloth. Nor did he change his shirt unless the one he wore was almost in rags.”⁵¹

In his thirty-fifth year St. Hilarion found “his eyes growing dim and his whole body shrivelled with a scabby eruption and dry mange.”⁵² To remedy these disorders, he had recourse to what would to-day be regarded as an unusually odd expedient: “he added oil to his former food and up to the sixty-third year of his life followed this temperate course.”⁵³

About a year after his burial St. Hilarion’s corpse was surreptitiously removed by his friend Hesychius from the island of Cyprus, whence it was transferred to

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the monastery at Majuma, in Palestine.⁵⁴ The selfsame biographer who is responsible for the glowing description of St. Hilarion's reprehensible bodily habits, despite all he has written, would have us believe that the mourners present at the reinterment beheld "the whole body as perfect as if alive, and so fragrant with sweet odours that one might suppose it to have been embalmed"!⁵⁵

But a still more amusing "miracle" related of the saint is a ridiculous incident for which the distinguished Latin Doctor offers the matter-of-course explanation that "the old man was enabled by grace to tell from the odour of bodies and garments, and the things which anyone had touched, by what demon or with what vice the individual was distressed."⁵⁶ To be sure, this sounds extremely childish to modern ears, but then we should bear in

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mind that Christ himself was a staunch believer in the existence of devils;⁵⁷ and, as for odours, surely no one will doubt that St. Hilarion's personal experience would naturally have tended to endow him with skill in matters olfactory, assuming even that he had not had the inestimable advantage of "divine grace."

If anyone is heard to give utterance to the complacent and hackneyed remark that "cleanliness is next to godliness,"⁵⁸ the obvious and unanswerable reply is that the truth of the dictum does not shine forth conspicuously in the lives and writings of Christendom's most venerated saints. Another case in point, in addition to those already enumerated, is that of St. Abraham (sixth century). What little is known of this "perfect and admirable man"⁵⁹ is derived chiefly from the *Life of St. Abraham the Hermit* and the *Life of*

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St. Mary the Harlot, both from the pen of St. Ephraem (sixth century).⁶⁰

St. Abraham was twenty years old⁶¹ when he deserted his bride to enjoy the blessings of an ascetic existence.⁶² It was, as St. Ephraem intimates, by “leading the life of an angel on earth”⁶³ for half a century⁶⁴ that “at its consummation he earned perpetual glory.”⁶⁵ “Who that looked at his face, which displayed the image of sanctity, did not feel the desire of seeing him more often?”⁶⁶

St. Abraham’s virtues simply eluded comprehension;⁶⁷ so manifold were they that (to quote from the last verse of the fourth Gospel), “if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.” “Oil did not come near his body; his face, or for that matter even his feet, were never washed from the

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day of his conversion. . . . His appearance was just like an unfading flower, and in his face the purity of his soul was discernible. . . . In all the fifty years of his abstinence he did not change the covering of goats' hair in which he had been clothed.”⁶⁸

St. Ephraem claims for the relics of St. Abraham a remarkable efficacy in healing the most deadly maladies. An invalid, regardless of the nature of his ailment, had but to touch the vestments of the holy man, when, presto! “without any delay health followed.”⁶⁹ It may be interesting to observe in passing that St. Abraham was apparently conscious of no incongruity in denouncing a devil that he imagined threatened to possess him, as nothing short of a “*most filthy demon*”!⁷⁰ Here, it must be confessed, one’s sympathies are (as usual) with the devil

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rather than with the saint, whom the Almighty, forsooth, had failed to enrich with a sense alike of humour and of justice.

Examples similar to those which have here been touched upon might be multiplied indefinitely. These are by no means isolated instances. On the contrary, they represent typical and in the main faithful⁷¹ portraits of all the early saints, who in turn influenced by their austerities the lives of innumerable successors.⁷² Unpleasant though the truth may be to some, it is nevertheless a fact that Christianity established itself upon a groundwork of asceticism. If the foundation is so rotten—and the term is used advisedly—what shall one say of the superstructure?

Even St. James, “the brother of the Lord”⁷³ (d. c. 63),⁷⁴ was in respect of cleanliness not a whit better than the rest, according to Eusebius (c. 260–c. 340), the

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“Father of Church History,”⁷⁵ who cites the testimony of St. Hegesippus (fl. c. 150–c. 180). “A razor never went upon his head, he anointed not himself with oil, and did not use a bath.”⁷⁶ His practice in the last-named respect is followed at the present day by the inmates of monasteries and nunneries in Roman Catholic lands (though not in “missionary countries” like England and the United States), perhaps, as Mr. Joseph McCabe wittily suggests, because “*le bon Dieu vous verrait!*”⁷⁷

St. Simeon Stylites (c. 390–459), whose excesses far surpassed those of any other in the calendar of the canonised, was on that very account the most revered of them all. When Tennyson desired to write a poem depicting the extreme rigour demanded by Christian asceticism, he chose as the subject of his verses St. Simeon,⁷⁸

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the personification of everything foul and repulsive.⁷⁹

None can ever appreciate in their totality the baneful effects of the theological doctrine that salvation of the soul is dependent upon mortification of “its worthless shell,” the body. It is no mere coincidence that the dismal ages of faith were filled with plagues and pestilences without number. It is no mere coincidence that the employment of natural means in averting and curing disease was considered a contravention of the will of God. In the light of countless facts, it is not at all astonishing that just in proportion as Christian belief diminished, the length of human life increased.⁸⁰

The Day of Judgment has come at last, but the Place of Judgment is here on earth. Christianity is on trial. Man, the Supreme Judge, has already condemned

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her on many counts, and she is now doomed to destruction and final dissolution.* Let us, the plaintiffs, not omit to add ASCETICISM to the endless list of her sins.†

* [Cf. Preface, last paragraph.]

† [The small superior figures, as has elsewhere been indicated, refer to the notes which are given in the appendix.]

PIETY AND PLAGIARISM*

SOME time ago Franklin Steiner's exposure of the Rev. William Sunday in the columns of the *Truth Seeker* evoked considerable comment from the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and various other newspapers in the land. The well-known evangelist, it will be recalled, had had the supreme audacity to steal an entire oration almost *verbatim* from the works of the late Colonel Ingersoll—present address, according to the evangelist, care of the Devil. Yet it must be said in justice to "Billy" Sunday that he is not the only divine guilty of "lifting" long

* [This title was originally followed by a sub-title reading: "Again Ingersoll Is the Victim of a Preacher's Penchant for Purloining."—See Preface.]

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passages bodily from Ingersoll. Another one who has committed the same offence is the Rev. Dr. Madison C. Peters, one of Brooklyn's most prominent clergymen. Both gentlemen, strangely enough, have denounced the very infidel whose thoughts neither hesitated to steal.

The present writer has in his possession a book by the Rev. Dr. Peters, entitled *The Beautiful Way of Life: Pictures of Happy Homes and Glimpses of Heavenly Mansions*. Its avowed purpose, as stated in the preface, was to assist the reader in finding his "earthly life a Path of Glory, and at last an eternal resting-place beneath God's Throne." *The Beautiful Way of Life* is replete with pious references to God, Jesus, Heaven, Salvation, etc., and includes the usual clerical "proofs" that the opinions of Franklin and Jefferson were not really heterodox, as

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Freethinkers maliciously maintain. So much by way of introduction.

On pages 303 and 304 of this treasure-house of orthodox wisdom is to be found a selection entitled “Love *vs.* Glory,” to which no name is appended. In the preface to the book the Rev. Dr. Peters expressly declares that “The no-name articles are either from the author’s pen or anonymous.” Inasmuch as the passage in question is written in the first person, the natural implication is that it is from the “author’s” pen. Comparison, however, with two of the most famous of Ingersoll’s lectures* yields the following interesting “deadly parallels”:

REV. DR. PETERS

A little while ago I stood by the grave of the old Napoleon—a mag-

INGERSOLL

A little while ago I stood by the tomb of the first Napoleon, a mag-

* I quote from the unauthorised pamphlet-versions cur-

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REV. DR. PETERS

nificent tomb of gilt and gold, fit almost for a dead deity—and gazed upon the sarcophagus of black Egyptian marble, where rest at last the ashes of the restless man. I leaned over the balustrade and thought about the career of the greatest soldier of the modern world. I saw him walking upon the banks of the Seine, contemplating suicide—I saw him at Toulon—I saw him putting down the mob in the streets of Paris—I saw him at the head of the army of Italy—I saw him crossing the bridge of Lodi with the tricolour in his hand—I saw him in Egypt in the shadows of the pyramids—I saw him conquer the Alps

INGERSOLL

nificent tomb of gilt and gold, fit almost for a dead deity, and here was a great circle, and in the bottom there, in a sarcophagus, rested at last the ashes of that restless man. I looked at that tomb, and I thought about the career of the greatest soldier of the modern world. As I looked in imagination I could see him walking up and down the banks of the Seine contemplating suicide. I could see him at Toulon; I could see him at Paris, putting down the mob; I could see him at the head of the army of Italy; I could see him crossing the bridge of Lodi, with the tricolour in his hand; I saw him in Egypt, fighting battles

rent at the time of the Rev. Dr. Peters' plagiarism and later collected under the title: *Col. R. G. Ingersoll's 44 Lectures*. The authorised Dresden edition of Ingersoll's works had not yet been published.

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and mingle the eagles of France with the eagles of the crags. I saw him at Marengo — at Ulm and Austerlitz. I saw him in Russia, where the infantry of the snow and the cavalry of the wild blast scattered his legions like winter's withered leaves. I saw him at Leipsic in defeat and disaster—driven by a million bayonets back upon Paris — clutched like a wild beast—banished to Elba. I saw him escape and retake an empire by the force of his genius. I saw him upon the frightful field of Waterloo, where chance and fate combined to wreck the fortunes of their former king. And I saw him at St. Helena, with his hands crossed behind him, gazing out upon the sad and solemn sea. I thought of the orphans and widows he had made

INGERSOLL

under the shadow of the Pyramids; I saw him returning; I saw him conquer the Alps, and mingle the eagles of France with the eagles of Italy; I saw him at Marengo, I saw him at Austerlitz; I saw him in Russia where the infantry of the snow and the blast smote his legions, when death rode the icy winds of winter. I saw him at Leipsic; hurled back upon Paris; banished; and I saw him escape from Elba and retake an empire by the force of his genius. I saw him at the field of Waterloo, where fate and chance combined to wreck the fortunes of their former king. I saw him at St. Helena with his hands behind his back, gazing out upon the sad and solemn sea, and I thought of all the widows he had made, of all the orphans, of

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REV. DR. PETERS

—of the tears that had been shed for his glory, and of the only woman who ever loved him, pushed from his heart by the cold hand of ambition. And I said I would rather have been a French peasant, and worn wooden shoes; I would rather have lived in a hut with a vine growing over the door, and the grapes growing purple in the kisses of the autumn sun; I would rather have been that poor peasant with my loving wife by my side, knitting as the day died out of the sky—with my children upon my knees and their arms about me; I would rather have been that man and gone down to the tongueless silence of the dreamless dust, than to have been that imperial impersonation of force and murder known as Napoleon the Great. And so I would,

INGERSOLL

all the tears that had been shed for his glory; and I thought of the woman, the only woman who ever loved him, pushed from his heart by the cold hand of ambition—and I said to myself, as I gazed, I would rather have been a French peasant and worn wooden shoes, and lived in a little hut with a vine running over the door and the purple grapes growing red in the amorous kisses of the autumn sun—I would rather have been that poor French peasant, to sit in my door, with my wife knitting by my side and my children upon my knees with their arms around my neck—I would rather have lived and died unnoticed and unknown except by those who loved me, and gone down to the voiceless silence of the dreamless

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REV. DR. PETERS

ten thousand thousand times.—“*Beautiful Way of Life*,” pp. 303–304.

INGERSOLL

dust—I would rather have been that French peasant than to have been that imperial impersonation of force and murder who covered Europe with blood and tears. — “*Intellectual Development*.”

Now compare the Rev. Dr. Peters' plagiarised selection with another version of Ingersoll's meditations at the tomb of Napoleon, and most of the minor differences occurring in the above-quoted parallel are immediately accounted for:—

REV. DR. PETERS

A little while ago I stood by the grave of the old Napoleon—a magnificent tomb of gilt and gold, fit almost for a dead deity—and gazed upon the sarcophagus of black Egyptian marble, where rest at last the ashes of the restless

INGERSOLL

A little while ago I stood by the grave of the old Napoleon, a magnificent tomb, fit for a dead deity almost, and gazed in the great circle at the bottom of it. In the sarcophagus of black Egyptian marble at last rest the ashes of

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REV. DR. PETERS

man. I leaned over the balustrade and thought about the career of the greatest soldier of the modern world. I saw him walking upon the banks of the Seine, contemplating suicide—I saw him at Toulon—I saw him putting down the mob in the streets of Paris—I saw him at the head of the army of Italy—I saw him crossing the bridge of Lodi with the tricolour in his hand—I saw him in Egypt in the shadows of the pyramids—I saw him conquer the Alps and mingle the eagles of France with the eagles of the crags. I saw him at Marengo—at Ulm and Austerlitz. I saw him in Russia, where the infantry of the snow and the cavalry of the wild blast scattered his legions like winter's withered leaves. I saw him at Leipsic in defeat

INGERSOLL

that restless man. I looked over the balustrade, and I thought about the career of Napoleon. I could see him walking upon the banks of the Seine contemplating suicide. I saw him at Toulon. I saw him putting down the mob in the streets of Paris. I saw him at the head of the army of Italy. I saw him crossing the bridge of Lodi. I saw him in Egypt fighting the battle of the pyramids. I saw him cross the Alps and mingle the eagles of France with the eagles of the crags. I saw him at Austerlitz. I saw him with his army scattered and dispersed before the blast. I saw him at Leipsic when his army was defeated and he was taken captive. I saw him escape. I saw him land again upon French soil, and retake

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REV. DR. PETERS

and disaster—driven by a million bayonets back upon Paris — clutched like a wild beast—banished to Elba. I saw him escape and retake an empire by the force of his genius. I saw him upon the frightful field of Waterloo, where chance and fate combined to wreck the fortunes of their former king. And I saw him at St. Helena, with his hands crossed behind him, gazing out upon the sad and solemn sea. I thought of the orphans and widows he had made —of the tears that had been shed for his glory, and of the only woman who ever loved him, pushed from his heart by the cold hand of ambition. And I said I would rather have been a French peasant, and worn wooden shoes; I would rather have lived in a hut with a vine

INGERSOLL

an empire by the force of his own genius. I saw him captured once more, and again at St. Helena with his arms behind him, gazing out upon the sad and solemn sea; and I thought of the orphans and widows he had made. I thought of the tears that had been shed for his glory. I thought of the only woman who ever loved him, who had been pushed from his heart by the cold hand of ambition; and as I looked at the sarcophagus I said I would rather have been a French peasant and worn wooden shoes; I would rather have lived in a hut, with a vine growing over the door and the grapes growing and ripening in the autumn sun; I would rather have been that peasant, with my wife by my side and my children upon my knees

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REV. DR. PETERS

growing over the door, and the grapes growing purple in the kisses of the autumn sun; I would rather have been that poor peasant with my loving wife by my side, knitting as the day died out of the sky—with my children upon my knees and their arms about me; I would rather have been that man and gone down to the tongueless silence of the dreamless dust, than to have been that imperial impersonation of force and murder known as Napoleon the Great. And so I would, ten thousand thousand times.—“*Beautiful Way of Life*,” pp. 303–304.

INGERSOLL

twining their arms of affection about me; I would rather have been that poor French peasant and gone down at last to the eternal promiscuity of the dust, followed by those who loved me; I would a thousand times rather have been that French peasant than that imperial personative [impersonation] of force and murder; and so I would ten thousand thousand times.—“*Liberty of Man, Woman, and Child*.”

It is manifest that both the lecture on “Intellectual Development” and that on “The Liberty of Man, Woman, and Child” formed the basis of the Rev. Dr.

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Peters' recast version of Ingersoll's reverie as printed in *The Beautiful Way of Life*. Curious as to what the clergyman might say in his defence, I sent him a letter containing the following query and enclosed a stamped and addressed envelope for his reply:—

“Would you kindly inform me, if it is not too much trouble, in what year *The Beautiful Way of Life* was first published? I was especially interested in the excellent and inspiring lines on pp. 303–304, entitled ‘Love *vs.* Glory,’ and should very much like to find out whether they are from your pen or anonymous. I observe that in the preface to the book you remark that the nameless articles are either one or the other.”

The somewhat unusual question, it seems, aroused the clergyman’s suspicions, as I had indeed expected it would. Instead of making a clean breast of the matter, he immediately sent me the following extraordinary reply:—

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"MY DEAR MR. KADISON: In reply to your inquiry I beg to say that the article to which you have reference was not from my pen. I do not know how it happened that due credit was not given. The lines are from Robert G. Ingersoll. The book, as you know, is a compilation which I hurriedly prepared when I was a young man of about 26. Those were the days of subscription books which were composed largely of the sayings of distinguished writers. I had thought there were none in existence, as it was published nearly thirty years ago.

"I am enclosing you a number of cards which will take you to manufacturers and wholesalers where you can buy direct at the same price the dealers buy, and in addition I am adding a few discount cards. Out of my lectures on the high cost of living, this coöperative movement has grown and it means a saving of one-third to one-half to people who are using the cards. Write your name and address on the cards and retain the same after using."

[Here follow the titles of some of the books by the Rev. Dr. Peters.]

"Very sincerely yours,

"[Signed] MADISON C. PETERS."

Why is the Rev. Dr. Peters so con-

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ciliatory? Why the unsolicited rebate coupons? What, in the name of common sense, have *rebate coupons* to do with the question at issue? If I know anything at all about ministerial psychology, the Rev. Dr. Peters' unseasonable and amusing outburst of generosity, otherwise so inexplicable, is to be explained only on the theory that the minister, in his eagerness to propitiate me, hit upon the extraordinary scheme of presenting me with *the equivalent of money* as a modest inducement to refrain from taking any unpleasant steps I might have in mind.

The Rev. Dr. Peters protests that he does not know how it happened that due credit was not given. Yet the solution of the riddle is only too simple. In a book intended for circulation exclusively among very orthodox folk of a generation ago it would obviously never do to let it be

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known that perhaps the most remarkable literary gem in the entire collection was from the crown of the infidel of infidels.

The Rev. Dr. Peters apologetically declares that the book was hurriedly prepared. Yet both the absence of misprints and the positively beautiful appearance of the work testify to its having, on the contrary, been prepared with exceptional care. Passage after passage, moreover, is attributed to such champions of religion as Talmage, Beecher, and Margaret Sangster. Unfortunate, is it not, that just *Ingersoll's* name should have *happened* to be omitted?

To be quite frank, the writer of this article would have been only too willing to let bygones be bygones and to refrain from exposing the Rev. Dr. Peters as a literary thief, had it not been for the existence of two circumstances which made

PIETY AND PLAGIARISM

it impossible to suppress the truth even in the interest of charity. The original draft of this article has been in the possession of the present writer for half a year, and his decision to have the article published is therefore not a hasty one, but, on the contrary, has been arrived at after perhaps longer deliberation than was necessary.

First: In the year 1892 (*after* the publication of *The Beautiful Way of Life*) there occurred the famous Ingersoll controversy in the course of which, after an unsuccessful attempt to boycott the New York *Evening Telegram* for having published the Agnostic orator's "Christmas Sermon," a number of clergymen of various denominations attacked the views of Ingersoll, who, needless to say, made the masterly rejoinders only an Ingersoll could make. Among those who assailed the distinguished heretic with especial

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venom and malignity was the Rev. Dr. Madison C. Peters. He it was who was able to find no more delicate epithets to apply to Ingersoll's arguments than "sneers," "foamings," and "ravings." Ingersoll, in his reply, exemplified the gentleness and gentlemanliness which his assailant preached.

Second, and more important: The Rev. Dr. Peters, as I discovered on further examination, is a *practised plagiarist*—that is to say, plagiarism is apparently a *habit* with him—and some of his literary thefts are of recent origin. In a book by him published *and copyrighted* as late as 1908 I have detected entire pages of plagiarised matter. Here is a choice specimen:—

REV. DR. PETERS

J. O. PECK

A man without enthusiasm is an engine

A man without enthusiasm is an engine

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REV. DR. PETERS

without steam. Your brain [*sic*] will not move unless the water is boiling. Better boil over than not boil at all. Don't bank the fires in your furnace. To a man sneering at excitement, a Western editor pithily replied: "There is only one thing done in this world without excitement, and that is to rot." Enthusiasm generates the impulse that drives manhood on to noble achievements. It arouses a supernatural heroism in one's own forces. It is the driving force of character; it makes strong men; it arouses unsuspected sources of ability. The man without enthusiasm in his work has lost the race of life before starting.—*Beginning of Chap. VI, "The Strenuous Career"* (Copyright, 1908). [The fact that the copyright is entered,

J. O. PECK

without steam. Your train won't move unless the water is boiling. . . . Don't bank the fires in your furnace. Pithily said a Western editor to a man sneering at excitement: "There is only one thing done in this world without excitement." "What is that?" "To rot!" he replied. . . . It [enthusiasm] generates the invincible pulses that hurl manhood on noble achievements. Bulwer says: "A certain degree of temerity is a power. . . . It arouses a supernatural heroism in one's own forces." Enthusiasm is the driving force of character. Enthusiasm makes strong men . . . arouses unsuspected sources of ability. A young man or woman without enthusiasm in the work of life has lost the race before starting.—*Article by*

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REV. DR. PETERS

not in the name of the author, but in that of one of the publishers, so far from mitigating, only aggravates the offence of plagiarism; for it involves the additional offence of selling stolen goods—and presumably under false pretences !]

J. O. PECK

one J. O. Peck, in Peters' "Beautiful Way of Life," pp. 271, 272, 273. (Sentences rearranged, where necessary, to conform to the order of the Rev. Dr. Peters' plagiarised version of 1908.)

The above is only a single instance chosen at random from among many similar ones that came to my notice. Practically the whole of pages 30, 31, and 32 of *The Strenuous Career*, for example, were "borrowed" without acknowledgment from the same article by J. O. Peck. The Rev. Dr. Peters evidently thought it a safe operation to make wholesale plagiarisms from an article by an obscure writer of a generation or more ago; by his own inadvertent admission in his letter

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to me, he was under the impression that the book containing that article together with the acknowledgment of its authorship was no longer extant.

There may be more cases of plagiarism in other works allegedly by the Rev. Dr. Peters; speaking for myself, I should be astonished if there were not. I have not, however, gone to the trouble of finding out definitely. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Dr. Madison C. Peters, stand up! “Billy” Sunday, rise! Now, Reverend Gentlemen, shake hands!*

* [Among the publications which commented on this article were the San Francisco *Star* and the London *Freethinker*. For the remarks of E. C. T., conductress of a woman's department in the *Star*, see *Truth Seeker*, Feb. 19, 1916, p. 121. See also editorial in *Truth Seeker*, Nov. 18, 1916, p. 741.]

SPINOZA: A TRIBUTE

“I thank . . . Spinoza, the subtlest of men.”
—*Ingersoll* (*in “A Thanksgiving Sermon”*).

“All our modern philosophers, though often perhaps unconsciously, see through the glasses which Baruch Spinoza ground.”—*Heine*.

EVEN in the present year of grace nineteen hundred and eighteen, malice and “wickedness of heart” are often charitably alleged to be the temper actuating those who urge the arguments of Reason as against the dogmata of Faith; but we, the “wicked of heart,” knowing our hearts, do well to ignore the mean and ignoble aspersion. That it is one glorious function of Rationalism to revive bitter memories of the past that better memories may fall to the lot of the future—in this

SPINOZA: A TRIBUTE

conviction is to be found at once the psychological mainspring and most potent inspiration of militant Rationalistic propaganda. Thus, we who call ourselves Rationalists, few and scattered though we be, can be trusted not to let the world forget the harrowing picture of Giordano Bruno slowly meeting death, on the Florentine Campo dei Fiori, in flames lit by the hands of Dominican friars—Bruno the infidel, grandest victim of basest Roman Catholic persecution. We can be trusted not to let the world forget how, in the city of Geneva, Michael Servetus was burned at the stake by order of the godly, devilish Calvin—Servetus the dissenter, undying prey to rabid Protestant zeal for the greater glory of God. And similarly can we be trusted not to let the world forget that the same or a like fate—most probably death by stoning—would

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have befallen Baruch de Espinoza (for so was the great Dutch thinker called before his formal emancipation) if Judaism, in his day, had been in the ascendant.

Nor, because Spinoza survived the malevolence of his saintly enemies, is he on that account less worthy the veneration of mankind than either the martyred Bruno or the martyred Servetus. These last imperilled their lives, and succumbed; Spinoza imperilled his life, and escaped; but he did not fail to justify, splendidly and consistently throughout his career, the observation—made two centuries later in allusion to him—that “to die for the truth, they say, is hard: *harder* it is to *live for it!*”

* * * *

Majestic beyond words in its simplicity, invested with a noble and solitary grandeur, heroic, the figure of Benedict

SPINOZA: A TRIBUTE

Spinoza stands at the entrance to that ancient temple which the sages of Miletus, first of the giant-brood of mighty thinkers, consecrated to Philosophy. Familiar enough to Rationalists, at least, is the inspiring story of Spinoza's pilgrimage: his birth, at Amsterdam, in 1632; his infancy, his boyhood, and then his youth, characterised by fearless, independent thinking; his excommunication, at the age of twenty-three, by the bigoted and densely ignorant rabbis, who would have followed the injunction of their divinely inspired Old Testament and stoned him, had they had the power to do so; his unceasing application, during the remainder of his life, in an atmosphere of almost perfect solitude, to philosophic study and meditation; his unpretentious pursuit, the while, of the humble calling—the grinding and polishing of lenses—by which he was enabled to

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gain a meagre, though to him ample, livelihood.

Such was the substance of the first five chapters—chapters uneventful enough but for their single dramatic incident. Had they formed the whole of the tale, the name “Spinoza” would have passed away together with him who bore it, and—well, there would have been no tale! But there were yet two chapters to be added—the first sublime and never-to-be-forgotten, the second tragic and ever-to-be-deplored; chapter the sixth: Spinoza’s construction of a system of thought unparalleled for sheer intellectual subtlety, and unequalled in its subsequent influence upon the minds of men;* and chapter the last: his untimely death, hastened by the ravages of tuberculosis, in the year 1677, when the

* It is not unnatural that Agnostics should view with satisfaction the ever-widening influence of Pantheism. For on the side of anthropomorphic religion, and in-

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deathless heretic was only in the golden prime of life.

* * * *

Oh, how much better pleased would the gentle rabbis of Amsterdam have been with Spinoza's execution than with the mere excommunication to which, for want of something deadlier, they felt themselves constrained to have recourse! Witness the fiendish wording of the ban which was publicly pronounced, on the 27th of July, 1656, upon the youthful Free-thinker who would not play the Pragmatist and dishonestly recant:—

“The members of the council do you to wit that they have long known of the evil opinions and doings of Baruch de Espinoza, and have tried by

deed of all theology grounded upon the idea of a personal God, Pantheism is Atheism; as the most creedless of the creeds, it is least remote from Agnosticism; and it may well serve as a halfway house for many who are destined to reach “the Promised Land” by a devious route.

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divers methods and promises to make him turn from his evil ways. As they have not succeeded in effecting his improvement, but, on the contrary, have received every day more information about the abominable heresies which he has practised and taught, and other enormities which he has committed, and as they have had many trustworthy witnesses of this, who have deposed and testified in the presence of the said Espinoza, and have convicted him; and as all this has been investigated in the presence of the rabbis, it has been resolved with their consent that the said Espinoza should be anathematised and cut off from the people of Israel, and now he is anathematised with the following anathema:—

“ ‘With the judgment of the angels and with that of the saints, with the consent of God—blessed be He—and of all this holy congregation, before these sacred scrolls of the law, and the six hundred and thirteen precepts which are prescribed therein, we anathematise, cut off, execrate, and curse Baruch de Espinoza with the anathema wherewith Joshua anathematised Jericho, with the curse wherewith Elisha cursed the children, and with all the curses which are written in the law: cursed be he by day, and cursed be he by night; cursed be he when he lieth down, and cursed be he when he riseth up; cursed be he when he goeth out, and cursed be he

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when he cometh in; the Lord will not pardon him; the wrath and fury of the Lord will be kindled against this man, and bring down upon him all the curses which are written in the book of the law; and the Lord will destroy his name from under the heavens; and, to his undoing, the Lord will cut him off from all the tribes of Israel, with all the curses of the firmament which are written in the book of the law. But ye that cleave unto the Lord your God, live all of you this day!"

"We ordain that no one may communicate with him verbally or in writing, nor show him any favour, nor stay under the same roof with him, nor be within four cubits of him, nor read anything composed or written by him."*

Conceived and framed in the vindictive spirit of the 109th Psalm, this infamous document serves but to recall to the modern reader, for whom it assuredly possesses no further significance, the circum-

* Cf. *Spinoza's Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being* (edited by A. Wolf), Introduction, pp. xlv-xli; Sir Frederick Pollock, *Spinoza: His Life and Philosophy*, 1880, p. 18; 2nd ed., 1899, pp. 17-18; Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, 1st ser., 1905, pp. 307-308.

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stance that it was Judaism that originally taught the thrice-damned lesson of religious persecution to Christianity—the lesson which the pupil-faith learned so well and applied so remorselessly. Beyond the recording of this familiar fact, suffice it to say that “the Lord” hath *not* destroyed Spinoza’s name “from under the heavens”! On the contrary, the very malediction which was designed to render that result the more certain, made possible, in fact, precisely the reverse! For, as has been eloquently said, the anathema, in effect, was for Spinoza “not a curse, but a blessing in disguise. It freed him entirely from sectarian and tribal considerations; it helped to make him a thinker of no particular sect and of no particular age, but for all men and for all times.”

* * * *

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To-day, “under the heavens,” the name “Spinoza” signifies* infinitely more than the name “Jehovah.”†

* Among *thinking* men and women, *of course*. The other kind does not count—except numerically.

† Is this mere fustian and bombast? Should any reader be disposed to feel that it is, let him peruse, say, the last chapter of Sir Frederick Pollock’s standard work, referred to above. (Cf. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xxv, p. 691; Picton, *Pantheism: Its Story and Significance, passim.*)

THE SUMMONS TO PRAYER

ON the first Sunday of October* multitudes of churchgoers throughout the United States assembled in their respective houses of worship and petitioned the Ruler of heaven and earth that the war raging in Europe might cease. But the struggle still goes on.

Prayer has not stopped the war. Prayer cannot and will not stop the war. And yet the President's prayer day proclamation is destined to effect very definite and momentous results. What will they be?

For one thing, the absence of an answer to their supplications will set many thousands thinking. These are a few of

* [1914.—See Preface.]

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the questions which they will ask themselves:—

“Can it be that God wishes the war to continue? If he does, what is the use of praying to him? If he does, is he really infinitely good? Or is he still a ‘jealous God’? Is he still the God who cries: ‘Vengeance is mine!’? If so, is he a God or a demon?

“If God wishes the war not to continue, why does it not end immediately? Is God not omnipotent? Why, in fact, did the war ever begin?

“Is God omniscient, or is he not? If the former, does he not know in advance what the result of the war is to be, and when it is to cease? Why, then, pray to him? And if he is not all-knowing, is he a God worthy of the name?

“Is there a personal God, or is there not?”

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Many will smother their doubts by devoutly murmuring, "Thy will be done," little suspecting that they thus blaspheme the very deity they worship. Others will manfully face the facts, and will accept the verdict of reason. There is but one possible verdict. Upon them will be forced the conviction that, whereas God and his churches have ever failed to secure peace, man alone and unaided, by adopting different tactics, may yet succeed in ushering in the reign of universal brotherhood.*

At the outbreak of the present European holocaust a correspondent of the London

* [To-day (May 14, 1918), as I re-read this passage, it occurs to me that exactly three and a half years have passed since the date of its first publication. Only three and a half years: yet how strange a sound have the words "universal brotherhood" acquired during that short period!]

" . . . All the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream."]

THE SUMMONS TO PRAYER

Literary Guide ventured the suggestion that the following form of intercession be used in the churches of all denominations:—

“Almighty God and Father and Protector of all that trust in Thee, who art the only giver of victory, and canst save by many or by few:

“We implore Thee, in this great calamity which has overwhelmed Thy people through the madness of wicked men, to save the world from the unspeakable horrors of war.

“For nearly two thousand years we have been taught that Thou canst do all this in virtue of Thy almighty will. We therefore implore Thee at this time to manifest Thy wisdom and power by changing the implements of destruction into the means of health and wealth, by causing strife and bloodshed to cease, and by making known the reality of Thy goodness.

“If our prayer receives no response, we shall know that Thy servants have deluded us with false promises, that Thy hand is nowhere visible in the life of the world, and that there is no heavenly Father in whose love we may trust.”

Yes, indeed; the believer in a personal,

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beneficent, overruling Providence will be obliged to put a number of painful questions to himself.*

Thus the world moves on.

* [Curiously enough, vestiges of belief in the beneficence of a personal God may persist (doubtless as a result, at least in part, of childhood training) even under the guise of Agnosticism. Thus, Sir Henry Thompson, who regarded himself as "agnostic to the backbone," nevertheless conceived "the beneficence of the *Infinite and Eternal Energy* [italics mine] to be proved beyond dispute," and maintained that he found "no difficulty" in "the existence of wars and misery." The letter containing and expatiating upon these opinions is introduced with the remark that the writer—whose parents, significantly, "were strict Baptists"—"became an Agnostic, although not with the sure-footedness of Huxley." Cf. Clodd, *Memories*, pp. 48-49.—More familiar, of course, is the case of Matthew Arnold. Cf. Bury, *History of Freedom of Thought*, pp. 218-219.]

Lines to I. D.

SEEK not through prayer the goal of your desire:
Vain must prove the quest!
Bend not the knee to but a fabled Sire
At a priest's behest!
Have faith—have faith in *me!*—and let me be to
you
What only Man can be—a friend and comrade true.

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“Not one reader in a hundred takes the pains to turn backwards and forwards, as such appendicular references require.”—MYLES DAVIES: *Athenæ Britannicæ*, vol. ii, p. 192 (London, 1716).

THE GOLDEN AGE OF FAITH AND FILTH—NOTES

1. Lecky, *History of European Morals*, 1869, vol. ii, pp. 119–120; 1904, vol. ii, p. 112; R.P.A. ed., vol. ii, p. 48.
2. The chronology, here and elsewhere, cannot be determined with precision, and must frequently be taken with the proverbial grain of salt.
3. St. Athanasius, *Life of St. Anthony*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. iv, p. 195.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 196. Cf. *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, vol. i, p. 250; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. i, p. 554; *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xviii, p. 687; Cassels, *Supernatural Religion*, R.P.A. ed., p. 98.
5. The translator has “into,” for which “to” is here substituted, in conformity with the best modern usage. (Cf. *New English Dictionary*, vol. vii, p. 1645.)
6. St. Athanasius, *Life of St. Anthony*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. iv, p. 209. Cf. White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, vol. ii, pp. 69, 71 note.

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7. Cf. St. Athanasius, *Life of St. Anthony*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. iv, p. 209.

8. *I.e.*, from about his twentieth year (cf. p. 39) until his death.

9. Cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. i, pp. 553, 555; *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, vol. i, pp. 250, 251; vol. vi, p. 466; *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. ii, p. 96; vol. xviii, p. 687; Neander, *History of the Christian Religion and Church*, 1849, vol. ii, p. 229.

10. *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (edited by John McClintock, D.D., and James Strong, S.T.D.), vol. vi, p. 468 (unsigned article). Cf. St. Athanasius, *Life of St. Anthony*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. iv, p. 195; Cassels, *Supernatural Religion*, R.P.A. ed., p. 99.

11. For reference to St. Athanasius as "Bishop of Alexandria," see *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. ii, p. 35 (art. "St. Athanasius"). For reference to him as "the great Archbishop of Alexandria," see *ibid.*, p. 34 (art. "Athanasian Creed"). Cf. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. iv, pp. xxxvii, 564.

12. St. Athanasius, *Life of St. Anthony*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. iv, p. 220.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Besides, it seems to have been accounted a great privilege to wear part of the apparel of a deceased ascetic. It is related of St. Anthony himself that "on the feast-days of Easter and Pentecost he always wore" the tunic of palm-leaves which St. Paul the Hermit "had so long worn" (St. Jerome, *Life of Paulus the First Hermit*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, pp. 301, 302); and St. Jerome concludes the treatise in question with the avowal that he "would much sooner take Paul's tunic with its merits, than the purple of kings with their punishment" (*ibid.*, p.

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303). Of St. Hilarion it is related that he bequeathed to his friend and disciple Hesychius "all his riches," comprising, in addition to "a copy of the Gospels," his eminently filthy "sackcloth tunic, cowl, and cloak" (*idem, Life of St. Hilarion, ibid.*, p. 314; cf. p. 315, and see pp. 51-54, above).

15. St. Athanasius, *Life of St. Anthony*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. iv, p. 221.

16. *Ibid.* Cf. Lecky, *History of European Morals*, 1869, vol. ii, p. 117; 1904, vol. ii, pp. 109-110; R.P.A. ed., vol. ii, p. 47; Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, vol. ii, p. 355; Maeterlinck, *Miracle of Saint Anthony, passim* (summarised in *New York Times Review of Books*, Aug. 11, 1918, p. 349).

17. The Athanasian Creed. Cf. *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, vol. ii, pp. 560-562; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. ii, pp. 33-35; *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. vii, p. 398; Bonner, *The Christian Hell*, pp. 7-8, 93.

18. St. Athanasius, *Life of St. Anthony*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. iv, p. 221.

19. Cf. *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, vol. i, p. 508; vol. vi, p. 468; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. x, p. 473.

20. Cf. arts. "Monasticism" and "St. Jerome" in *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, *Catholic Encyclopedia*, and *Encyclopædia Britannica*; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. v, p. 75; *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. xi.

21. St. Jerome, *Letter XIV* (to Heliodorus), in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. 14.

22. Cf. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. 13.

23. A pedantic allusion to Virgil's *Aeneid*, bk. xii, l. 59.

24. St. Jerome, *Letter XIV* (to Heliodorus), in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. 14.

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25. Matt. x, 34-39. (Cf. Luke xii, 51-53; xiv, 26-27, 33.)
26. Cf. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. xvii; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. viii, p. 341.
27. St. Jerome, *Letter XVII* (to the Presbyter Marcus), in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. 21. This letter was written from the desert in the year 378 or 379 (*ibid.*, p. 20).
28. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
29. Cf. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. 22.
30. St. Jerome, *Letter XXII* (to Eustochium), *ibid.*, p. 25.
31. Cf. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. xviii; *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, vol. iv, p. 831; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. viii, p. 341; *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xv, pp. 327-328.
32. Cf. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. 299; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. viii, p. 341; *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xv, p. 327.
33. St. Jerome, *Life of Paulus the First Hermit*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. 300. Cf. Lecky, *History of European Morals*, 1869, vol. ii, pp. 114-115; 1904, vol. ii, pp. 107-108; R.P.A. ed., vol. ii, p. 46.—“Paulus the First Hermit” is to-day commonly referred to as “St. Paul the Hermit.” Cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. xi, pp. 590-591.
34. St. Jerome, *Life of Paulus the First Hermit*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. 301.
35. *Ibid.* (Cf. pp. 41-42, abcve.)
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 301-302.
37. Cf. p. 53.
38. St. Jerome, *Life of St. Hilarion*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. 306.
39. October 21st.
40. Cf. Addis and Arnold’s *Catholic Dictionary*, 9th ed., 1917 (revised by Rev. T. B. Scannell, D.D.), pp. 94-95;

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Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, vol. i, p. 886; *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. iv, p. 505; *Protestant Dictionary* (edited by Rev. Charles H. H. Wright, D.D., and Rev. Charles Neil), pp. 84, 85; McCabe, *Twelve Years in a Monastery*, R.P.A. ed., pp. 92-93; *idem*, *Popes and Their Church*, p. 163.

41. *Breviarium Romanum*, die xxi Octobris (October 21st). Cf. White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, vol. ii, pp. 69, 71 note.

42. Even according to the free and not wholly accurate rendition given by one who, in his preface, protests "that if, (which he hopes and believes is not the case,) either the translation itself, or the footnotes, should contain anything which a faithful Catholic ought not to have written, he has written such passage inadvertently." See *Roman Breviary*, translated by John, Marquess of Bute, K.T., 1879, vol. ii, p. 1323, which I cite in the text in order to avoid even the remotest appearance of desiring to force an unfavourable translation. Yet it may be pardonable to point out, in a note relegated to the appendix, that according to the Latin version St. Hilarion "used to sleep on the ground. Nor, indeed, did he ever wash or change the sackcloth *in which he once was clothed*, since he used to say *that it was superfluous to look for cleanliness in goats' haircloth*" (cf. p. 54, above).

43. Newman's works, *passim*; see, e.g., his *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, 1882, pp. 323-324. Cf. *Protestant Dictionary*, p. 85.

44. Cf. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. 303.

45. St. Jerome, *Life of St. Hilarion*, *ibid.*

46. *Ibid.*, p. 304.

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*, p. 311.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 304.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 310.

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51. *Ibid.*, p. 305. Cf. pp. 51-52, above, and note 42; Lecky, *History of European Morals*, 1869, vol. ii, p. 115; 1904, vol. ii, p. 108; R.P.A. ed., vol. ii, p. 46; White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, vol. ii, pp. 69, 71 note.

52. St. Jerome, *Life of St. Hilarion*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. 305.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 314-315. St. Jerome unreservedly declares that "the holy man Hesychius" "stole the saint's body" (*ibid.*).

55. *Ibid.*, p. 315. Cf. Cassels, *Supernatural Religion*, R.P.A. ed., pp. 99-100.

56. St. Jerome, *Life of St. Hilarion*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. 310.

57. That is, of course, if Jesus was indeed (as I believe him to have been) an historical character.—Cf. the Gospels, *passim*.

58. Quoted with approval—though not, as generally believed, originated—by John Wesley (*Works*: sermon entitled "On Dress"), who should have known better. Likewise, Bacon was in error in declaring that "cleanness of body was ever esteemed to proceed from a due reverence to God" (*Advancement of Learning*, Wright's ed., p. 142; Kitchin's ed., p. 177; cf. *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, bk. iv, chap. ii). For recent statements similar in purport, see, e.g., arts. by Rev. Frank Crane, D.D., in *New York Globe*, Sept. 22, 1916; Jan. 5, 1918.—Cf. Bonner, *The Christian Hell*, p. 122; *Literary Guide*, Jan., 1913, p. 2; *New York Tribune*, Sept. 1, 1917, p. 8, col. 5; *New York Evening Post*, July 1, 1918, p. 10, col. 3; Hutchinson, *Preventable Diseases*, p. 98; Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, chap. xxxix; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. vii, p. 114.

59. St. Ephraem, *Vita Sancti Abrahæ Eremitæ*, Prologus Auctoris, in Migne, *Patrologiæ Cursus*, Series Latina, vol. lxxiii, col. 282.

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60. Not, as has been commonly but erroneously asserted, St. Ephraem Syrus. Cf. Baring-Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, vol. iii, p. 275.

61. Cf. St. Ephraem, *Vita Sanctæ Mariæ Meretricis*, in Migne, *Patrologiæ Cursus*, Series Latina, vol. lxxiii, col. 658.

62. *Idem*, *Vita Sancti Abrahæ Eremitæ*, *ibid.*, col. 283.

63. *Op. cit.*, Prologus Auctoris, *ibid.*, col. 284.

64. *Op. cit.*, *ibid.*, col. 292; *idem*, *Vita Sanctæ Mariæ Meretricis*, *ibid.*, col. 658. Cf. Baring-Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, vol. iii, p. 278.

65. St. Ephraem, *Vita Sancti Abrahæ Eremitæ*, Prologus Auctoris, in Migne, *Patrologiæ Cursus*, Series Latina, vol. lxxiii, cols. 281–282.

66. *Op. cit.*, *ibid.*, col. 284.

67. Cf. *op. cit.*, Prologus Auctoris, *ibid.*, cols. 283–284.

68. *Op. cit.*, *ibid.*, col. 292. Cf. Lecky, *History of European Morals*, 1869, vol. ii, p. 117; 1904, vol. ii, p. 110; R.P.A. ed., vol. ii, p. 47; White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, vol. ii, pp. 69, 71 note.

69. St. Ephraem, *Vita Sanctæ Mariæ Meretricis*, in Migne, *Patrologiæ Cursus*, Series Latina, vol. lxxiii, col. 659.

70. *Idem*, *Vita Sancti Abrahæ Eremitæ*, *ibid.*, col. 291.

71. To be sure, it might conceivably be maintained that it was a sheer physical impossibility for the saints to have been quite as filthy as they are portrayed in their own and in one another's accounts. The two possible alternatives, however, are plain enough: either the saints were indeed as superlatively filthy as depicted, and proudly told the truth about themselves and one another—in which case the objection would not be well taken; or else, in fulfilling what they regarded as a necessary condition of salvation, they were only as dirty as they could possibly be, and supplied the slight deficiency by falsehood. I am content to leave the resolution of this exquisite dilemma to those who may have at

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heart the reputation and good name of the Christian saint-hood.

72. For brief references to additional cases of saintly filthiness, see Lecky and White, pages elsewhere cited; *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. xiii, p. 126; McCabe, *Twelve Years in a Monastery*, R.P.A. ed., p. 248 (quoted in *Truth Seeker*, Nov. 11, 1916, p. 727); Ferrer, *Origin and Ideals of the Modern School* (translated by Joseph McCabe), Putnam ed., p. 52; R.P.A. ed., p. 38. Cf. Ingersoll, *Lectures and Essays* (Watts), 1st ser., pp. 65, 111, 114, 117; 2nd ser., pp. 142, 150; Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, 1879, pp. 11-12; Boxall, *The Anglo-Saxon*, pp. 186, 187.

73. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, bk. ii, chap. xxiii.

74. *Encyclopædia Biblica*, vol. ii, col. 2320. (But cf. note 57, above.)

75. Cf. *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, vol. iii, p. 356; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. v, p. 617; *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. ix, p. 954.

76. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, bk. ii, chap. xxiv. Cf. Cassels, *Supernatural Religion*, R.P.A. ed., pp. 268-269; Lecky, *History of European Morals*, 1869, vol. ii, pp. 111-112; 1904, vol. ii, p. 105; R.P.A. ed., vol. ii, p. 45; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. viii, p. 281.

77. "The good God would see you!"—McCabe, *Twelve Years in a Monastery*, R.P.A. ed., p. 133; cf. pp. 16, 130, 150 note, 168, 224, 225, 227. (See also pp. 41, 76, 134.)—Cf. Ingersoll, *Lectures and Essays* (Watts), 3rd ser., pp. 38, 125; Parton, *Life of Voltaire*, vol. i, p. 303.

78. See Tennyson's poem, "St. Simeon Stylites."

79. Cf. Lecky, *History of European Morals*, 1869, vol. ii, pp. 118-119, 121, 138; 1904, vol. ii, pp. 111-112, 114, 130; R.P.A. ed., vol. ii, pp. 47-48, 55; Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, bk. i, chaps. xiii-xiv, in Theodoret and Evagrius,

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History of the Church, pp. 272-276; White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, vol. ii, pp. 69, 71 note; Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, vol. ii, pp. 355-356.

80. See, for an admirable account of the historical relation of Christianity to sanitation, White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, chap. xiv. Cf. Mark Twain, *The Mysterious Stranger*, p. 123; Rev. E. Conybeare, *Highways and Byways in Cambridge and Ely*, pp. 153, 220 (cited in *New York Evening Mail*, Nov. 9, 1916); McCabe, *Bankruptcy of Religion*, pp. 275-276 (cited in *Literary Guide*, May, 1917, p. 66); *Literary Guide*, Jan., 1908, p. 4; Nov., 1914, p. 173; Dec., 1916, pp. 180-181; Feb., 1917, p. 31; March, 1917, p. 38; Oct., 1917, p. 155; Dec., 1917, p. 181; *Truth Seeker*, Jan. 13, 1917, pp. 17-18; *Life*, June 27, 1918, p. 1019. For modern developments and side-lights, see Ferrer, *Origin and Ideals of the Modern School* (translated by Joseph McCabe), chap. vii; Hutchinson, *Preventable Diseases*, pp. 97-98; Clodd, *Memories*, inscription facing p. 124; Cook, *Life of Florence Nightingale*, vol. i, p. 479 (cited in *Literary Guide*, Jan., 1914, p. 9); *Literary Guide*, March, 1908, p. 46; Nov., 1914, p. 171; April, 1916, p. 55; *Truth Seeker*, July 29, 1916, pp. 484-485; Aug. 26, 1916, p. 549; Sept. 30, 1916, pp. 631-632; Feb. 3, 1917, p. 71; Feb. 10, 1917, p. 88; Nov. 24, 1917, pp. 744, 745. For additional references to the uncleanliness of saints treated of in the text—the collection of references already given being by no means exhaustive—see, e.g., *Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects, and Doctrines* (edited by Smith and Wace), *passim*; *Dictionary of Christian Biography and Literature* (edited by Wace and Piercy), *passim*. For a recent indictment of Christian asceticism, interesting partly because written from a Christian (Methodist) point of view, partly because the author makes no mention whatever of the most loathsome aspect of the subject he discusses, see Baines-Griffiths, *Our Brother of Joy*, *passim*; and cf. Rt. Rev. C. H.

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Brent (Episcopalian bishop), *Splendour of the Human Body*, pp. 9 *et seq.* For the specifically psychological significance of asceticism, see Hart, *Psychology of Insanity*, p. 4; Janet, *Major Symptoms of Hysteria*, pp. 8-10; *Literary Guide*, March, 1918, pp. 41-42; and cf. Emerson, *Swedenborg; or, The Mystic*, in *Complete Works*, Centenary Edition, vol. iv, p. 97.

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